

UNPARALLELED LOVINGKINDNESSES

NO. 3242

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“LORD, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?”
Psalm 89:49

THE LORD had made an everlasting covenant with David, ordered in all things and sure, yet that covenant was not intended to preserve him from trouble. When this Psalm was written, he had been brought very low. His crown had been cast down to the ground, his enemies had rejoiced over him, and he had become a reproach to his neighbors.

Then his thoughts flew back to the happier days of the past and the covenant which the Lord had made with him—and either David himself, or Ethan, writing on his behalf, inquired, in the words of our text, “LORD, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?”

I. Applying this passage to the people of God, I remark, first, that WE HAVE RECEIVED MANY MERCIES IN THE PAST.

Is that too common a matter for you to think and talk about? If you know it so well, why do you forget it so often? The mercies of God wake us every morning, so that we are as used to them as we are to the sunlight, yet some of us think but little of them. They follow us till the night and we get as accustomed to them as we do to our beds, yet perhaps some of us think less of them than we do of our beds.

We have providential mercies every moment of the day and every day of our lives—we can never count the number of them, for they are more than the sands upon the seashore. I am going, however, to speak of the spiritual mercies with which God has enriched us—the blessings of the upper springs—and it will help you to recall them if I take the list of them that is given at the beginning of the 103rd Psalm.

Turn to it and read, first, “*who forgiveth all thine iniquities.*” All of us to whom these words belong should constantly remember that we are pardoned souls. We were not so once—oh, what would we not have given then to know what we know now? At that time, our iniquities pressed upon us as a burden that we could not bear, the stings of conscience gave us no rest, and the terrors of hell got hold of us.

When I was under conviction of sin, I felt that I would willingly have given my eyes, my hands, my all, if I might but be able to say, “I am a forgiven soul.” So, now that we are pardoned, let us not forget the Lord’s lovingkindness in forgiving all our iniquities. If you, my hearer, can forget it, I may well question whether your iniquities have ever been forgiven, for the pardon of sin is so great a mercy that the song which it evokes from the heart must last forever.

The next mercy in the psalmist’s list is, “*who healeth all thy diseases.*” Bethink again, my brother or my sister, what the Lord has done for you in this respect. Once, pride possessed you like a burning fever and long prevented you from submitting to God’s simple plan of salvation—but you have been cured of that terrible malady and now you are sitting humbly at the feet of Jesus rejoicing in being saved by grace.

Perhaps you were once like the demoniac of old. The chains of morality could not bind you and the fetters of human law could not restrain you. You did cut and wound yourself and you were a terror unto others. But now, thanks be unto God, you are so completely healed that there is not even a scar left to show where you were wounded. Will you not praise the Lord for this unspeakable mercy? What would

you not have given for it once when your many diseases held you in their cruel grip? Then cease not to praise JEHOVAH-Rophi, “the Lord that healeth thee.”

The next mercy also demands a song of grateful praise—“*who redeemeth thy life from destruction.*” You have been saved from going down into the pit—the ransom price has been paid for you and you have been redeemed—not with silver and gold, “but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Remember that, now, there is no wrath against you in the heart of God, for His righteous anger on account of your sin was all poured out upon the head of His dear Son, your Surety and Substitute. The devil has no claim upon you now, for you have been redeemed by Christ unto the last farthing. Then can you forget to praise Him who has done such great things for you?

What would you not have given, at one time, to have had half a hope that you were a redeemed soul, when your poor knees were sore through your long praying, and your voice was hoarse with crying unto God? You would gladly have bartered the light of day, the comforts of life, and the joys of friendship for the assurance of your redemption. Well, then, since you have now obtained that priceless boon, forget not to praise the Lord for all His lovingkindness towards you.

For the next clause in the Psalm is this, “*who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.*” Think, brother or sister in Christ, what the Lord has done for you. Not content with saving you from hell, He has adopted you into His own family, made you a son or a daughter of the King of kings, and set a royal crown upon your head—a crown of “lovingkindness and tender mercies.” You are made an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, is not this unparalleled lovingkindness? Is not this indeed the tender mercy of our God towards you? Then can you ever forget such lovingkindness and tender mercy?

There have been times, in the past history of some of us, when that ancient prophecy has been most graciously fulfilled in our experience, “Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” So, as we remember the former lovingkindnesses of the Lord, we rejoice that He still crowns us with lovingkindnesses and tender mercies.

We must not forget the next verse—“*who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.*” If we are in Christ Jesus, we have all that we want—we are perfectly satisfied. We do not want a better Savior, we do not want a better hope, we do not want a better Bible, we do not want better promises.

We do want more faith, but we do not want a better ground of faith. We do desire to have more love to our Lord, but we do not desire a better object for our love. We desire ever to dive deeper and deeper, but only in the fathomless sea of Jesu’s love. Others are roaming hither and thither, vainly seeking satisfaction, but our mouth is so filled with good things that we are satisfied.

We asked and the Lord gave to us. We prayed for pardon and the Lord fully forgave us for Jesus’ sake. We have received so much mercy from Him that our soul is satisfied and soars aloft as on an eagle’s wings, leaving all terrestrial cares, and sorrows, and doubts far below us amid the earth-born clouds above which we have mounted by God’s grace.

II. Now, having thus briefly recalled the Lord’s former lovingkindnesses, I have to remind you, in the second place, that WE ARE NOT ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF THE SAME FLOW OF MERCY TOWARD US.

The psalmist asks, “LORD, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?” Well, where are they? Why, they are where they used to be, though we do not always realize them. The Lord’s mercies have not changed, but our perception of them is not always as vivid as it ought to be. Let us again consider the mercies of which I have already spoken to you.

“*Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.*” There are times when a Christian fears whether his sins are really forgiven. He is saved, yet he has a doubt whether he is saved or not. All his past sins seem to rise

up before him and the foul suggestion of unbelief is, “Can it be possible that all those sins have been put away? Have all those mountains of iniquity been cast into the Red Sea of the Savior’s atoning blood?”

Many young believers, who judge themselves too much by their feelings, are apt to imagine that they have been deceived and that they are still under condemnation. If I have any brethren or sisters like that here, let me assure them that there are times when the very best of the saints have to cry out in the bitterness of their soul, “LORD, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?” The believer in Christ is always justified as far as the law of God is concerned, but he does not always hear the proclamation of pardon in the court of conscience.

God’s sun is always shining, but there are clouds that obscure its beams, yet it is only hidden for a while. So is it with the lovingkindness of the Lord with regard to the forgiveness of sin—whether we always realize it or not, the forgiveness that has once been bestowed upon us will never be withdrawn from us, world without end.

It is the same with the next mercy—“*who healeth all thy diseases.*” It may be that there are some of us here who know that the great Physician has healed our soul maladies, yet at times, unbelief and other evil diseases cause us pain and agony of spirit. It is with us as it was in the days of Noah when the fountains of the great deep were broken up—and happy are we if we can now float in the ark of our faith above the awful sea of our depravity which threatens to drown every spiritual comfort and cover every hope.

If I were to look within my own heart for comfort and hope, I should often be in despair, but when I look away to my Lord alone, then I realize what He has done and is still doing for me, for He still “healeth” all my diseases.

Marvel not, dear friends, if you cannot see yourselves growing in grace as you would like to do. When a farmer goes to look at his root crops, he is not so much concerned as to the appearance of the part that is above ground—he wants to know how that part is flourishing that is out of sight. So, very often, a Christian is growing under ground, as it were—growing in grace, and knowledge, and love, and humility—though he may not have as many virtues and graces that are visible to other people, or even to himself.

Sanctification is being wrought in the saints according to the will of God, but it is a secret work—yet, in due time the fruit of it will be manifest, even as the farmer at the proper season digs up his roots and rejoices that his labor has not been expended upon them in vain.

Notice, too, that next mercy—“*who redeemeth thy life from destruction.*” Now mark this—those who are once redeemed are always redeemed. The price of their redemption was paid upon Calvary and that great transaction can never be reversed. I dare to put it very strongly and to say that they were as fully redeemed when they were dead in trespasses and sins as they will be when they stand in the full blaze of JEHOVAH’s presence before the eternal throne. They were not then conscious of their redemption, but their unconsciousness did not alter the fact of their redemption.

So is it with the believer—there are dark days and cloudy days in his experience, but he is just as truly saved in the dark and cloudy day as when the sun is shining brightly and the clouds have all been blown away. In the old days of slavery, when a slave’s freedom had been purchased, there may have been times when he had not much to eat, or when he had many aches and pains, but such things did not affect the fact that he was a free man.

Suppose someone had said to him, “My poor fellow, you have nothing in the cupboard, you are very sick and ill, you are still a slave”? He would have replied, “That is not good reasoning. I know that I was redeemed, for I saw the price paid for my ransom. I have my free papers and I shall never again be a slave.” So is it with believers—the Son of God has made them free by giving Himself as a ransom for them, so they shall be “free indeed.” Their redemption does not depend upon their realization of it, but upon their Redeemer who has made it effective for them.

The same principle applies to the next mercy—“*who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.*” There may be some Christians here who need to learn a lesson that one good Methodist tried

to teach another whom he met at a class meeting. It grieved him as he heard over and over again the story of his brother's trials and troubles, but nothing about the multitudes of mercies with which he was continually being crowned.

So one day he said to him, "My brother, I wish you would change your residence—you do not live in the right part of the town." "How is that?" inquired the other. "Why, you live where I used to live, down in Murmuring Street. It is very dark and narrow, the chimneys always smoke, the lamps never burn brightly there, and all sorts of diseases abound in that unhealthy quarter. I got tired of living in Murmuring Street, so I took a new house in Content Street. It is a fine, wide, open street where the breezes of heaven can freely blow, so the people who dwell there are healthy and happy. And though all the houses in the street are of different sizes, it is a very remarkable thing that they are all of them just the right size for the people who live in them. The apostle Paul used to live in that street, for he said, 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,' so I would advise you, my brother, to move into Content Street as soon as you can."

That was very good advice—and we may pass it on to any murmurers or grumblers whom we know. Think, beloved, how the Lord is still crowning you with lovingkindness and tender mercies. I know you are not strong, but then you have not that acute pain you used to have. I know that you are growing old, but that only means that you are getting so much nearer heaven. I know your friends are fewer than they used to be, but then those who are left are true friends. So you see that you are still crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

So is it with the last mercy in the list—"who satisfieth thy mouth with good things." I will venture to say that the Christian has not one real want that is not satisfied with the good things that God has provided for him. If he has any other want, or thinks he has, it is better for him not to have that want supplied.

If we want the pleasures of sin, it is a great mercy that God will not give them to us, for the supply of such a want would be our soul's damnation. If we could gather any comfort through following that which is evil, it is of the Lord's mercy that such comfort is not our portion.

*"This world is ours and worlds to come;
Earth is our lodge and heaven our home;"*

so what can we want beside?

III. Now, thirdly, WHY ARE WE NOT ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF THE SAME FLOW OF MERCY TOWARD US?

Sometimes we miss our former comforts as the result of sin. Sin indulged is a certain barrier to happiness. No one can enjoy communion with Christ while turning aside to crooked ways. To the extent to which a believer is inconsistent with his profession, to that extent will he be unhappy—and it will be no cause for surprise if he has to cry, "LORD, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?"

We must always distinguish between the punishment of sin which Christ endured on His people's behalf and the fatherly chastisement with which God visits upon them for their wrong-doing. Though He will not condemn them as a Judge, He will chastise them as a Father. And they cannot expect to enjoy the lovingkindnesses of the Lord while they are enduring the strokes of His rod because of their transgressions.

We may also lose a comfortable sense of God's mercy *through neglecting to use the means of grace.* Leave off the regular reading of your Bible and then you will be like the man who misses his meals and so grows weak and languid. Neglect private prayer and then see whether you will not have to cry with Job, "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness!"

Stay away from the prayer meetings and then, if your soul is not sad, it ought to be. If a man will not come where there is a fire, is it surprising that he cries that he cannot get warm? The neglect of the means of grace causes many to inquire, “LORD, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?”

The same result follows *when any idol is set up in our heart*. While we worship the Lord alone, the temple of our heart will be filled with His glory. But if we set up an idol upon His throne, we shall soon hear the rushing of wings and the divine voice saying, “Let us go hence.” God and mammon cannot abide in the same house. Remember that you serve a jealous God and be very careful not to provoke Him to jealousy. Every idol must be cast down, or His comfortable presence cannot be enjoyed.

Coldness of heart towards God is another cause of the loss of enjoyment of His favor. When the heart grows spiritually cold, the whole being soon gets out of order. If the heart be warm and vigorous, the pulsations throughout the entire frame will be kept strong and healthy, but when the heart is cold, the blood will be chilled in the veins and all the powers will be numbed and paralyzed.

So, beloved, see to it that in the power of the Holy Spirit you maintain the love of your espousals—that pristine warmth of holy affection which you delighted to manifest when first you knew the Lord—or else you will soon have to cry, “LORD, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?”

Live near to God and this shall not often be your cry. But if you backslide from Him, this shall soon be your sorrowful inquiry. If you have to mourn an absent God, seek to know the reason why He has withdrawn Himself from you and repent of the sin that has separated you from Him.

IV. Now, lastly, LET US REMEMBER THAT THE DIVINE COVENANT REMAINS FIRM AND STEADFAST UNDER ALL CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.

The covenant made with David was established by the oath of God, and Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says that “God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

For our consolation, let us remember, first, that the *parties to the covenant are always the same*. God has not one set of chosen ones today and another set tomorrow. In the Lamb’s book of life, there are no erasures of certain names and the insertion of others in their place. No, beloved, that is not the way in which the Lord deals with His elect—He does not play fast and loose with them like that. He does not love them one day and hate them the next. Oh, no!

*“Whom once He loves, He never leaves,
But loves them to the end.”*

And, next, *the Seal of the covenant is always the same*. It is sealed with the precious blood of Jesus. His one great sacrifice on Calvary made the covenant forever sure—

*“’Tis signed, and sealed, and ratified,
In all things ordered well.”*

We do not seal the covenant—Christ has done that—it is His blood that makes the covenant sure to all for whom He stood as Surety and Substitute. This is our consolation even when we have no present enjoyment of the blessings that are secured to us by the covenant. Even the sealing of the Spirit is not the Seal of the covenant, though it is to us the certain evidence of our interest in the covenant—it is like a seal on our copy of the covenant, the great deed itself, sealed with the blood of Jesus, is safely preserved in the archives of heaven where none can mutilate or steal or destroy it.

Further, *the efficacy of the covenant is always the same*. It is not like human covenants, which may or may not be fulfilled, or which may become void through lapse of time. This covenant is eternal,

covering past, present, and future—and it shall be fulfilled to the last jot and tittle, for He who swore unto David will certainly perform all that He has promised to His own chosen people.

*“The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.”*

When God said, “Let there be light,” there was light. And when that same God says, “Let there be light in that dark soul,” the light at once enters the heart and it is divinely illuminated. Thus it has come to pass that we, who were sometimes darkness, now are light in the Lord. And to us comes the apostolic injunction, “Walk as children of light.”

The efficacy of the covenant does not depend upon us—if it did, it would be a poor, feeble, fickle thing that would fail us just when we needed it most. There would be no hope of our ever getting to heaven if we had to depend upon our own efforts, or our own merits, or anything of our own—our comfort arises from the fact that the covenant is made on our behalf by our great Representative and Redeemer, who will Himself see that all that is guaranteed to us in the covenant is fulfilled in due season.

There rolls the glorious chariot of salvation in which all believers are riding to heaven. Death and hell cannot stop it, all the fears of any who are in it will not affect their eternal safety, and not one of them shall be found to be missing in the day when the roll of the redeemed is called in glory. Be of good courage, believer, for you are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

Even though you have, for a while, to mourn the loss of the Lord’s former lovingkindnesses, search your heart to see how far that loss has been caused by your own sin, and then return to the Lord with all your heart, and He will renew to you His former favors, and give to you new mercies of which you have not as yet even dreamed.

As for those here who have no former lovingkindnesses of the Lord to which they can look back, I pray that this may be the beginning of better days to them. May they think of the mercies which the Lord has bestowed upon others and may they cry unto Him, “Lord, do to us as You have done to them. Adopt us into Your family as Your sons and Your daughters, and let us share in all the blessings that You give to Your children!”

Remember, dear friends, that it is by simple and sincere faith in the crucified Christ of Calvary that sinners are eternally saved. It is by His blood that we who once were afar off, are now made nigh. Whosoever believes in Him shall not be ashamed or confounded, therefore, my hearer, believe you on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, and God shall be glorified. So may it be, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 89

Verses 1-2. *I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.* [See Sermon #1565, Maschil Of Ethan, A Majestic Song]

Here is an eternal song concerning eternal mercy. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, so the saints’ praise for the never-ending mercy must itself be without end.

The psalmist has made known God’s faithfulness to all generations, not only by speaking of it, but especially by writing of it, for that which is written abides when that which is merely spoken is soon forgotten. God’s faithfulness concerns heaven as well as earth, and He will establish it “in the very heavens.”

3-4. *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.*

The complete fulfillment of this glorious covenant promise concerns, not only David and his seed, but “great David’s greater Son” and His spiritual seed—the chosen people with whom the Lord has made “an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.”

5-7. *And the heavens shall praise thy wonders O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.*

A holy reverence is becoming in all who draw near to the thrice-holy JEHOVAH, whether in the upper sanctuary or in the congregation of the saints on earth. In His gracious condescension, He allows His people wondrous familiarity in their approaches to Him, yet this must never make them forget the infinite distance that separates the Creator from even the highest and holiest of His creatures.

8-10. *O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rule the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.*

The ruling of the raging of the sea, the stilling of the stormy waves, and the breaking and scattering of the might of Egypt are used by the psalmist to illustrate the omnipotence of JEHOVAH, before which the mightiest monarch on earth had no more power than if it had been a corpse.

11-12. *The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.*

The psalmist rejoices in the Lord as the Creator and Possessor of the heavens above and the earth beneath. “All things were created by him, and for him.”

13. *Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.* [See Sermons #674, The Mighty Arm and #1314, which has the same title]

Amid all the varying expressions that the psalmist uses, he continues to admire and magnify God’s majestic might. Whether for the defense of His people or the overthrow of His enemies, His arm is mighty, yea, more than that, for it is almighty. No human language can adequately describe that glorious hand which has only to be opened to satisfy the desire of every living thing.

14. *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

What blessed heralds does the Lord employ! “Mercy and truth shall go before thy face.” It is these gracious attributes, especially as they are displayed in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, that enable us even to welcome those sterner attributes—“justice and judgment,” which are the habitation of God’s throne.

15. *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound:*

There are many that hear it, but perhaps not one out of a thousand of them that really know it. The hearing of the joyful sound is not sufficient to make people blessed, though faith comes by hearing—it is the understanding of what is meant by the glad tidings—it is the reception of the Gospel message which brings immediate and eternal blessedness.

15. *They shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.*

The practical effect of a saving knowledge of the Gospel is a holy walk, a walk of communion with God. Dear friends, do you walk in that way? Do you know the joyful sound? Can you discern the difference between the true and the false Gospel? Can you distinguish the contrast between the harmonies of the one and the discords of the other? Do you know the inner secret of the heavenly music? Has it ever vibrated in your own souls? Happy are you if this is the case with you.

The Psalmist goes on to show how such people are blessed.

16. *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day:*

They shall not have mere passing fits of joy, but they shall be glad from morning to night.

16. *And in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.*

They shall mount to a higher platform of joy than that on which the men of the world are standing. They shall be lifted up in soul and spirit by the righteousness of God, especially as they see how that great attribute guarantees their eternal salvation.

17-19. *For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. 18 For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.*

[See Sermon #11, The People's Christ]

This is the very marrow of the Gospel. This is indeed “the joyful sound” which makes us truly blessed—the fact that God did, of old, exalt “One chosen out of the people,” with whom He entered into an eternal covenant, pledging Himself to bless us through Him.

20. *I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:*

David was the means of bringing great blessings to the people over whom he ruled. God blessed the whole nation through him and the covenant made with David was virtually a covenant made with all the people of Israel. In like manner, the covenant made with “great David’s greater Son” is virtually made with all those for whom He stood as Surety and Representative. The essence of the Gospel lies in the covenant which God has made with His Son, Jesus Christ, on behalf of all His chosen people.

Notice that God found David and anointed him as king, even as He has taken the Lord Jesus, and anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

21. *With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.*

The omnipotence of God is manifested in Christ, for He is “the power of God” as well as “the wisdom of God.”

22. *The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.*

“The son of wickedness” did afflict David for a while, but afterwards he came to the throne and ruled gloriously over God’s ancient people. So is it with our covenant Lord and King. The wicked cannot now exact upon Him, nor afflict Him—He sits upon the throne of God in glory far beyond their reach.

23. *And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.*

Who can ever stand up in opposition to Christ? He is that stone of which He Himself said, “Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

24. *But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.*

God is ever with His Son, Jesus Christ, in the plenitude of His faithfulness and mercy, to make Him a continual blessing to His people.

25. *I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.*

Our King is a great King and He rules over sea and land—there is no limit to His dominions—and there will be no end to His righteous rule.

26. *He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.*

All God’s children are a praying family and His only-begotten and well-beloved Son sets a noble example in this respect as well as in everything else. He is still the great Intercessor before the throne of His Father.

27. *Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.*

Christ is indeed “higher than the kings of the earth,” for He is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Do not your hearts rejoice as you think of this blessed King with whom God has entered into a covenant to bless all who are trusting in Him, even the very poorest and feeblest of them? What a joy it is to us to see Jesus striking hands with the Eternal and entering into an everlasting covenant on our behalf.

28-29. *My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and His throne as the days of heaven.*

There can never be an end to the throne of Christ, for His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and there can never be an end to the family of Christ, for His seed shall endure forever.

30-32. *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then—*

“Then”—what? “I will destroy them, and sweep them away forever”? Oh, no! “Then”—

32. *Will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.*

There is no sword in God’s hand to be used against His own children, but He does hold a rod—and that rod makes us smart and causes the blueness of the wound which cleanses away evil. We are grieved when we feel its strokes, yet there is covenant mercy in them. The rod of the covenant is one of the best things that ever comes to us, since it whips our folly out of us. God grant us grace to kiss the rod whenever we transgress against Him and He visits our iniquity with stripes!

33. *Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*

Notice the use of the word, “him,” here, as if it was intended to teach us that God’s love to His dear Son, and to His people in Him, is so great that, though He may chasten us for our transgressions, He will never cast us away.

34-37. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.*

In the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the dynasty of David shall endure forever, and the spiritual seed of Christ shall also never come to an end. By the most binding covenant and the most solemn pledge, and the most sacred oath, JEHOVAH has guaranteed the everlasting kingdom of His Son and the eternal endurance of “His seed.”

38-45. *But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.*

Spiritually, this sad description reveals the sorrowful state of the professing church of Christ in the times in which we live.

46. *How long, LORD? Wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?*

That was the wisest thing for the psalmist to do, and it is our best course, also. In the darkest days of the most sinful age, we can always resort to prayer, let us do so.

47-48. *Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.*

The brevity of life makes it all the more important that we should waste none of it—and that we should appeal to the Lord to interpose speedily on the behalf of His truth and those who love it.

49-52. *LORD, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth? Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people; Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed. Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen.*

The Psalm ends upon its keynote of praise unto JEHOVAH. There had been much to sadden the writer, as there is much to sadden us in these days. But we can unite with him in saying, “Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen and Amen.”

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